DIRECTOR'S OFFICE
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The Cleveland Museum of Art

Press Release

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MARCH FILM SERIES
Variations on *Que Viva Mexico!*
Wednesday evenings, March 3–31, 1999
Sergei Eisenstein's Mexican film x 4
Museum hours: Tues.-Sun. 10:00-5:00, Wed. and Fri. 10:00-9:00

One of the most famous movies never made—Sergei Eisenstein's unfinished Mexican epic, *Que Viva Mexico!*—is reincarnated at the Cleveland Museum of Art in a series titled **Variations on *Que Viva Mexico!***.

Between 1930 and 1932, the great Soviet filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein (*Potemkin, October*) found himself in Mexico shooting his grandest epic yet. He had come at the urging of muralist Diego Rivera, whom the director had met and befriended in Moscow during the 1920s. Partly inspired by Rivera's monumental paintings, *Que Viva Mexico!* was envisioned as a vast, six-part revolutionary fresco of the country's history, culture, and people. The movie was bankrolled by American socialist writer Upton Sinclair, who pulled the plug on the project when it went over budget and behind schedule. Eisenstein went home with one episode remaining to be shot and Sinclair kept the negative. Despite Eisenstein's entreaties to send it to Moscow so that he could edit and finish the film, the Russian master never worked again on his magnum opus." Eisenstein died in 1948

In this series the museum presents present three different feature films made from Eisenstein's spectacular Mexican footage, as well as two programs of unedited rushes as shot by Eisenstein and his brilliant cameraman Eduard Tissé. The films are Sol Lesser's *Thunder Over Mexico* (1933), *Time in the Sun* (1939) by Eisenstein's biographer Marie Seton, and *Que Viva Mexico!* (1979), a "definitive" Soviet version, assembled by Eisenstein's co-director Grigori Alexandrov. The compilations of raw footage were put together by Soviet film scholar Jay Leyda for the Museum of Modern Art, where Sinclair ultimately deposited Eisenstein's footage. "Though we will never know what Eisenstein's *Que Viva Mexico!* would have looked like," says film program coordinator John Ewing, "these approximations contain astonishing imagery and are breathtaking and unforgettable themselves." Admission to each program is $6, CMA members $3.

(film details on reverse)

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Thunder Over Mexico
Wednesday, March 3, 7:00
(USA, 1933, b&w, 16mm, 69 min.) Produced by Sol Lesser from footage directed by Sergei Eisenstein. A Mexican peon plots revenge after his girlfriend is raped by a landowner's friend. Preceded at 7:00 by Sol Lesser's *Death Day* (USA, 1933, b&w, 16mm, 16 min.), a short film culled from Eisenstein's footage of Mexico's Day of the Dead celebrations.

A Time in the Sun
Wednesday, March 10, 7:00
(USA, 1939, b&w, 16mm, 60 min.) Produced by Marie Seton from footage directed by Sergei Eisenstein. Eisenstein's original scenario for his unfinished six-part masterpiece *Que Viva Mexico!* was consulted for this approximation of the epic that might have been. English narration.

Eisenstein's Mexican Film: Episodes for Study, Part 1
Wednesday, March 17, 7:00
(USA, 1930–31, b&w, silent, 16mm, 126 min.) Directed by Sergei Eisenstein. Film scholar Jay Leyda compiled and annotated this raw footage from Eisenstein's unfinished, six-part Mexican film *Que Viva Mexico!* Leyda summarizes Eisenstein's film plan and presents fragmentary sequences as they came out of the camera, without attempting to convey the final form this footage would have taken. Part 2 shows next Wednesday.

Eisenstein's Mexican Film: Episodes for Study, Part 2
Wednesday, March 24, 7:00
(USA, 1930–31, b&w, silent, 16mm, 129 min.) Compiled by Jay Leyda from footage directed by Sergei Eisenstein. See description of Part 1.

Que Viva Mexico!
Wednesday, March 31, 7:30
(USA/USSR, 1932/79, b&w, 35mm, 85 min.) Assembled by Grigori Alexandrov from footage directed by Sergei Eisenstein. Alexandrov, Eisenstein's assistant on his unfinished Mexican film, constructed this "definitive" version of the six-part epic intended as a grand tribute to the land, people, and spirit of Mexico.

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